

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1746

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAYI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: JANATA WINS A "PRESTIGE" BY-ELECTION

REF: NEW DELHI 7312

1. THE JANATA PARTY SCORED AN IMPORTANT, MORALE BOOSTING VICTORY MAY 21 WHEN ITS CANDIDATE WON THE BY-ELECTION FOR THE BANERA SEAT IN THE RAJASTHAN STATE ASSEMBLY. THE JANATA CANDIDATE, KALYAN SINGH KALVI, DEFEATED THE CONGRESS (I) NOMINEE BY A SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN (23,695 VOTES TO 11,443 VOTES).

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THE 12,000 VOTE MARGIN OF VICTORY WAS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THAT SCORED BY THE JANATA IN WINNING THE SEAT IN THE JUNE 1977 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. THE BANERA ASSEMBLY SEAT HAD BECOME VACANT DUE TO THE DEATH OF THE UNCUMBENT JANATA MLA. THE OFFICIAL CONGRESS DID NOT CONTEST THE BY-ELECTION, AND THE OTHER TWO CANDIDATES, BOTH INDEPENDENTS, LOST THEIR DEPOSITS.

2. THE BANERA RESULT COMES TWO WEEKS AFTER THE JANATA DEFEATS IN THE AZAMGARH LOK SABHA AND TWO ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTIONS IN U.P. (REFTEL). MRS. GANDHI, CLEARLY INTENT ON REPEATING HER U.P. SUCCESSES AND MAINTAINING HER MOMENTUM, HAD CAMPAIGNED VIGOROUSLY IN BANERA AND DREW LARGE CROWDS. HOWEVER, HER "MAGIC" EVIDENTLY DID NOT WORK IN THIS INSTANCE; HER CANDIDATE'S DEFEAT SEEMS TO LEND SOME SUBSTANCE TO THE JANATA'S CLAIM THAT CROWDS COME TO SEE HER ONLY "OUT OF CURIOSITY" AND THAT AUDIENCE SIZE DOES NOT PRESAGE ACTUAL VOTING PATTERNS. THE BANERA OUTCOME WILL HELP TO COUNTER THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE TREND IN NORTH INDIA IS ALL IN MRS. GANDHI'S FAVOR, AND WILL SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT SHOT IN THE ARM FOR THE RULING PARTY.

3. THE RELATIVELY GOOD IMAGE OF CHIEF MINISTER SEHEKHWAT'S GOVERNMENT IN THE STATE PROBABLY PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE JANATA VICTORY. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO HARYANA, U.P. AND BIHAR, WHOSE CHIEF MINISTERS BELONGED TO THE BLD AND ARE SEEN AS CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF GOI HOME MINISTER CHARAN SINGH, RAJASTHAN SUFFERS LITTLE CHRONIC FACTIONALISM AND THE JANATA SEEMS TO BE RUNNING A FAIRLY EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT STATES RUN BY THE FORMER JANA SANGH (SUCH AS RAJASTHAN) ARE IN FAR BETTER SHAPE ADMINISTRATIVELY AND POLITICALLY THAN THOSE CONTROLLED BY THE "ERST-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHILE" BLD. THE POINT WILL NOT BE LOST ON OBSERVERS HERE THAT THE JANATA SEEMS TO FARE POORLY IN THOSE BY-ELECTIONS (E.G. AZAMGARH) IN WHICH CHARAN SINGH INJECTS HIMSELF AND SEEKS TO PLAY UPON CASTE RIVALRIES.

4. WITH THE ONSET OF INTENSE SUMMER HEAT ACROSS INDIA, BANERA IS LIKELY TO BE THE LAST OF THE CURRENT SERIES OF BY-ELECTIONS. LOK SABHA SEATS FROM SAMASTIPUR (BIHAR) AND FATEHPUR (U.P.) ARE VACANT, BUT BY-ELECTIONS TO FILL THEM WILL PROBABLY NOT BE HELD UNTIL AFTER THE MONSOON ENDS IN SEPTEMBER.

5. MEANWHILE, IN U.P. THE JANATA POT CONINTUES TO SIMMER. IN THE WAKE OF PERSISTENT EFFORTS BY SO-CALLED DISSIDENTS TO OUST CHIEF MINISTER RAM NARESH YADAV, THE JANATA PARLIAMENTARY BOARD, THE PARTY'S HIGHEST DECISION-MAKING BODY, RECENTLY DIRECTED YADAV TO HOLD A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE AMONG HIS JANATA MLA'S. INDUSTRIES MINISTER GEORGE FERNANDES WILL BE THE OBSERVER AT THE JUNE 4 MEETING IN LUCKNOW AT WHICH THE CHIEF MINISTER'S FATE WILL PRESUMABLY BE DETERMINED. THE DECISION WAS OPPOSED BY HEALTH MNISTER RAJ NARAIN, CHIEF LIEUTENANT OF

THE STILL HOSPITALIZED CHARAN SINGH. HIS OUTSPOKEN  
CRITICISM OF THE MOVE IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF JANATA  
INDISCIPLINE AND FACTIONALISM.  
GOHEEN

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## Message Attributes

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